

SAIONJI-HARADA MEMOIRS

December 8, 1937

"We have got an understanding with the other side that the terms will vary with the change of the war situation, but the junior officers of the Army, entirely ignorant of such circumstances, said that the fault was with Hirota who has too early confided our real intention to the other side. We are annoyed to have the members of the General Staff, including Kagesa, threatening clamorously since yesterday that Hirota should be killed, or apprehended. Just at noon on December 8, the War Minister came and said that he would dine with the Prime Minister Konoye. When he told it to the War Minister, the latter said that he would tell the Chief of the Second Section beforehand to keep it secret, for it would be troublesome if the middle-class officers should hear about it. Already at that time, however, the junior officers, including Kagesa, of the General Staff and the War Ministry were exceedingly angry to learn it."

After that I went back home, and about half past four, I called again at the official residence of the Minister of the Navy. As I spoke of the above-mentioned matter in the presence of the Minister and the Vice-Minister of the Navy, they both answered to the following effect: The fault was rather with the Army. Both the Army and the Navy once wanted to cease war as soon as possible, when the General Staff was so intent on a peace move through the medium of Major-General Ott, the military attache to the German Embassy at Tokyo, that it pressed the Foreign Ministry for negotiation. Since then, the negotiation has been continued by the Foreign Minister. As I have repeatedly stated, the Army, Navy and Foreign Ministers have once a week dined together to talk about diplomacy and arrived at a mutual understanding. Accordingly, nothing should happen so long as the Army is well controlled. We will argue for the Foreign Minister that such a hitch has

taken place because the Army failed to inform the Foreign Ministry, even if through the medium of the Prime Minister, of the change of the operations plans according to the change of the war situation, in order to keep a close communication with the diplomatic authorities. So we ought not to reproach the Foreign Minister only.

At any rate, Foreign Minister Hirota has previously sought an understanding with the other side that we might present new terms, so there is no objection to submitting newly stronger terms. The fact is, those who wanted to attack and exclude Hirota took this opportunity to cause trouble, in spite of the fact that there was no question whatever because we have an understanding with the other side that the above-mentioned terms corresponded to the then situation and that the former would vary according to the change of the latter. The Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal was also angry at the embarrassing attitude of the Army toward the present problem on diplomacy.